

Outreach to the Private Bar

TIG Conference Wednesday, Jan. 26, 2005 (2:15-3:45pm)

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1. Intro to Session:

1. Understanding the Benefits a Statewide Website Can Bring to a Pro Bono Community
2. Recognizing the Hurdles in your Pro Bono Community (and/or Statewide Website)
3. Assessing the Need and Finding Solutions

2. Set-up for Brainstorming Activity:

Divide the room into 2 groups. Each group has a whiteboard or large flip-chart.

Group 1: Benefits

Brainstorm and list all the ways a website be used in a pro bono community

(Becky will be with this group to prime the pump)

Group 2: Hurdles

Brainstorm and list the hurdles to pro bono and/or using the statewide website to promote pro bono in your statewide community.

(David will be with this group to prime the pump)

(After 5 minutes have the groups switch and add to the list started by the other group).

3. Follow-up to Brainstorming Activity: Benefits (See page 3 for list of benefits)

Show websites that exemplify the benefits:

- Recruitment
 - o Ohio: <http://www.oslsa.org/OSLSA/PrivateWeb>
 - o Arkansas <http://www.arlegalservices.org/Home/PublicWeb/Volunteer>
- Training/CLE –
 - o San Francisco <http://www.probono.net/SF>
 - o New York <http://www.probono.net/ny/>
- Online opportunities directory
 - o <http://www.probono.net/ny/oppsguide.cfm>
- Recognition/Retention
 - o San Francisco <http://www.probono.net/SF>

4. Follow-up to the Brainstorming Activity: Hurdles (See page 4 for list of hurdles)

Use this as an intro to highlight specific programs and how the statewide website was used to address some of these hurdles.

1. Georgia -
2. Nebraska (could speak to turf wars and lack of pro bono attorneys – incentives they offer, partnerships formed)
3. Ohio (?) –
4. Others - Open up the discussion to others in the room and how they resolved some of these hurdles.

5. Assessing the need and finding a solution

How do you take these ideas back to your state?

1. Assess the current need (or perceived need)
 - a. Talk to pro bono coordinators
 - i. What are their goals for the pro bono program
 1. Are there ways that the website can help achieve those goals?
 2. How do they envision technology helping their program
 - ii. Can the website make their day-to-day activities more efficient
 - Announcements, News, Events, Recruitment, etc.
 - b. Talk to pro bono attorneys
 - i. How might the website improve their volunteer experience
 - ii. What resources would they want on the site
 - iii. How would they see themselves using the various tools
 - c. Define the partnerships needed to use the statewide website in the pro bono community:
 - i. Bar Association
 - ii. Pro Bono Programs
 - iii. Law Schools
 - iv. Law Firms

2. Proposing a Solution:

- a. Start with what people want and need
 - i. Start with one or two components
 - ii. Respect the time and energy staff already dedicate to their job by focusing on tasks the staff already do- the website acts a medium (i.e. email a training announcement with a link to the website rather than a direct mail)
- b. Recognize where technology can help and where it cannot
 - i. (Technology can bring tools and enhance communication or outreach – but it cannot solve political battles or fix broken relationships)
 - ii. Staff still needs to provide content for the site.
- c. An online community must be nurtured – it will still take time and energy
 - i. Provide training on how to use the technology
 - ii. Continued tech support and tech advocacy

How a Statewide Website can Benefit a Pro Bono Community:

Recruitment –

Get the word out – link from law firm homepages, the bar association, volunteer placement organizations.

Online sign-up,
Information

Post News and Announcements

CLE trainings
Events
News of Cases
Clinics and opportunities
Cheaper than paying to copy and do direct mail

Case Placement

Advertise types of cases and/or clinics
Have actual cases listed with a sign-up form
Search or learn about specific case opportunities
Search opportunities (by area of law or location)

On-Going Support of Pro bono attorneys/

Improves Quality of representation
Provides Case Support
Eases anxiety of first time pro bono attorneys
Library of resources
Central Location that is easy to use
Access to info 24 hrs a day/ 7 days a week
Specific to Poverty Law
Access to Document Assembly
Training materials
Brief Bank – Have pro bono attorneys/firms contribute content to the site
Links to helpful sites
Forms
Sample motions
Attorney directory (both legal aid and pro bono attorneys)
Forms – Pro bono time sheets, evals, etc.

Training and Events-

Training Calendar
Clinic/Opportunities Calendar
Fundraising Events Calendar
Use Web stats to learn about what the pro bono attorneys use the site for and download to address in training

Recognition

E-letters
Pro bono Homepage award announcements (of both individuals and firms)
Case Announcement recognition (won a big case, donated so many hours)
Law firm recognition for contents
Partnership and staff support from the bar association, other legal service programs

Hurdles You May Face in Using the Statewide Website in a Pro Bono Community

Lack of pro bono attorneys in the community

- Small population

- Lack of urban areas with large firms

- Solo Practitioners who take low-fee cases rather than pro bono

Identifying needs of pro bono attorneys

Generating content and maintenance

PB have huge expectations for site – beyond LS/TIG resources

Moral opposition to free labor/weak pro bono culture

Coordinating diverse groups/pockets of funding

Outreach/Marketing/Awareness

Conflicts (pro bono attorneys might also be opposing counsel on another case)

State judiciary's reluctance to use web to assist litigants

Evaluation/Outcomes

Pro Bono difficulty relating to legal services clients

Turf wars between programs using pro bono attorneys:

- Competition for the pro bono attorneys

- Competition for money that comes with relationships with firms

- Political, philosophical and personal differences that cause problems between programs

- Proprietary concerns about materials

Staff attorneys can do it better attitude

- Resentment or lack of understanding about pro bono by staff attorneys

- Unwillingness to share information (sample pleadings, motions, etc) with pro bono attorneys

- Concern it takes longer to train and supervise pro bono attorneys than to do it yourself

Program operating the statewide website is not a leader in the pro bono community.

Lack of time - not enough time to pull the right people together to strategize how to use the website and pro bono.

Fear of technology –

- By program staff

- Perceived fear of pro bono attorneys (i.e. they won't use this)

How to maintain momentum of relationships

Income decreases if you post training materials you normally sell

Lack of computer knowledge skills

Lack of tech support

Questions of validating identity/security